

Cooperation over Conflict: The Women's Movement and the State in Postwar Japan. By MIRIAM MURASE. New York: Routledge, 2006. 148 pp. \$75.00 (cloth).

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This book examines the significant role of the state in developing women's centers and organizations across Japan and identifies a central paradox: With all the trappings of an advanced industrial society, how is that women in Japan still endure significant gender inequality?

Miriam Murase offers a complex explanation that clearly breaks down the research question into a compelling examination of the institutional and legal constraints that have significantly weakened the autonomy of organizations at the national center of the women's movement. In particular, chapter 4, "Women's Policy and Policy Making," offers a perceptive analysis of the role played by women's advocacy organizations in helping to make state policy. Murase demonstrates that the close collaboration between women's activists and the state was overdetermined by the extent to which local and national government agencies funded and regulated institutions at the center of the women's movement. Murase's model of collaboration parallels that identified by Sheldon Garon, yet the strength of her analysis is the depth of social science data marshaled to support her argument. Plentiful tables and charts are woven into concise explanations of how policy has been influenced by institutional collaboration, making this book well worth reading.

The crux of Murase's argument is that access to funds and facilities determine the success of individual women's groups (the organizations formed by women's activists) and that women's centers (the buildings that house the office space and meeting rooms used by women's groups) often control both. In chapter 3, "Women's Centers in Japan," Murase identifies the crucial role played by international organizations of foreign origin, such as the Japan Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Young Women's Christian Association, in establishing the women's movement in Japan. Murase also credits prominent prewar feminists such as Ichikawa Fusae and Oku Mumeo, whose ardent activism continued into the postwar era. In 1948, Oku founded the Housewives Association (Shufuren), which Murase rightly considers "the most powerful consumer group in Japan" (p. 52). In 1956, using private funds collected from individual donations over a six-year time frame, Oku was able to fund the construction of the Housewives Association Center (Shufu Kaikan), which she was determined to make a national center for the advocacy of women's issues. Murase traces similar origins for several other women's centers, including the National Women's Center (Zenkoku Fujin Kaikan) and the Women's Suffrage Center (Fusen Kaikan), but she argues that the overwhelming number of women's centers were built with state money and are run, at least in part, by local or national bureaucrats. Because state authorities often have tremendous influence over the majority of women's centers, she

argues, women's groups have found it beneficial to cooperate with the local and national government.

It seems that this book would have benefited from an examination of women's groups engaged in the oppositional politics that emerged in the antinuclear, peace, feminist, and labor movements. Most antinuclear and peace groups formulated their political agenda in opposition to the state and early on identified theirs as a cause of special concern to women. The "women's lib" movement also engaged in confrontational politics and later engendered the formation of local women's rights and consumer advocacy organizations across Japan that continue to work outside the mainstream and not necessarily in cooperation with the state.

Murase's focus on mainstream women's organizations, primarily composed of middle-class women, has also led her to overlook the tens of thousands of blue-collar women who participated in political mobilizations sponsored by housewives associations and women's departments affiliated with their or their husbands' labor unions. Women members of the housewives association of the Japan Coal Miners' Union (Tanrô), for example, successfully mobilized a militant organization of 20,000 rural working-class women living in the mining towns of Hokkaido and Kyushu. Run by women, for women, local affiliates of the Tanfukyô militantly fought for safe housing, clean water, equal access to education for their children, better health care, and their husbands' right to job security and a family wage—"women's issues" very different from those advocated by state-affiliated and cooperative women's organizations. It seems likely that women of different economic classes experienced different sorts of political organizations, and perhaps it is not surprising that women who lead national women's organizations find benefit in cooperating with a government composed of men from their own economic class.

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Mémoires d'une Éphémère (954–974) par la mère de Fujiwara no Michitsuna [Memoirs of an Ephemera (954–974) by Fujiwara no Michitsuna's Mother]. Translated from the Japanese [*Kagerô nikki*] into French by JACQUELINE PIGEOT. Paris: Collège de France, Institut des Hautes Études Japonaises, 2006. 342 pp. €23.00 (paper).

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